

inantly metaphor) and other imaginative inflections (hypothetical action and the hierarchical use of genres and text types) that shape narratives and literary worlds.

The final cluster, consisting of Chapters 7, 8 and 9 represents a kind of apology for literature, in that it illustrates how literature shapes humans, human life, and thus the world in which we live (Chapter 7). In Chapter 8, Pettersson explains why literature matters and how we benefit from the delight and wonder that literary texts provoke. He concludes the study with ten reasons a comparative study of the creation of literary worlds can benefit students and teachers of literature, highlighting its unchallenged universal and humanist importance (Chapter 9). Pettersson's claim holds true that, despite the hardships and concerns that make up our lives, people have persisted in creating, performing, writing, listening to and reading literary stories. He adds to his

argument that it still makes sense to adopt a universal (and predominantly structuralist) approach to studying the phenomenon of literature.

In summary, *How Literary Worlds Are Shaped* represents a successful synthesis of the available research on literature as a uniquely human phenomenon, which is a result of the human desire to understand, represent, and preserve human experiences in oral, visual and written forms. As such, literature is simultaneously a source of pleasure (or delight and wonder, as Pettersson suggests) and knowledge. This study can help the less experienced reader (even one whose professional interests lie outside the humanities) understand how crucial literary imagination is to shaping our human identities, and reminding us why literature (still) matters.

Ljubica Matek

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AN INVITATION TO INTELLECTUAL COOPERATION ON TRANS/NATIONAL WORK IN PROGRESS

Doris Bachmann-Medick, ed., *The Trans/National Study of Culture: A Translational Perspective*, Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2016, 271 pp. (paperback)

This collection of papers, edited by distinguished cultural studies scholar Do-

ris Machmann-Medick, brings together authors from different disciplines in the humanities and social sciences, to discuss the complexities of translating transnational cultural traffic into an international cultural project, by relying on an analytical tool that can accommodate the transformative nature of cultural studies: translation in its widest sense.

Bachmann-Medick's introductory contribution raises a series of issues the volume attempts to answer: does the study of culture considered in a global context lead to a specific hybridisation or, alternatively, does it lead to various points of departure from the measuring rod of the Anglo-American theories?

Is it possible to debunk the established hegemony of Anglo-American cultural frames, and if so, how can scholars achieve this? Aware that rejecting the hegemony of the model that introduced cultural studies into the global academic discourse in the first place is impossible, Bachmann-Medick immediately clarifies that there are ways to remodel and refurbish the house of cultural studies by “truly pluralizing [it] into multi-sited courses and discourses, and thus ‘provincializing’ it at the same time” (3) in the sense of Dipesh Chakrabarty’s influential study *Provincializing Europe* (2000) and its important “addendum,” which is included in this volume. This is why case studies anchored in different systems of knowledge represent an important starting point for revealing how knowledge about culture is produced and distributed. Bachmann-Medick proposes three possible models of this global project that could contribute to a more holistic approach to the “transnational game of ping-pong” (5): “a localizing perspective,” which may answer questions like whether the German *Kulturwissenschaften* needs American cultural studies, and at the same time go beyond the mapping of nation-states to challenge the essentialism of former national models; “a universalizing perspective,” which does not investigate the creation of global cultural capital as a simple game of internationalisation, but as reflecting asymmetries; and “a translational perspective,” which, instead of considering the production, distribution and legitimation of knowledge like the previous models, focuses on intellectual cooperation, which may disentangle the notion of un/translatability in the context of practical negotiations.

The second introduction by Ansgar Nünning, who, like Bachmann-Medick,

is an acknowledged cultural studies scholar, also lays down a series of possible theoretical paradigms for the future development of the transnational study of culture. A German scholar, Nünning juxtaposes *Kulturwissenschaften* in Germany with cultural studies in the UK to argue that even though both terms function as a “catchphrase for a wide range of different approaches and concepts” (29), they examine culture in ways that reflect the differences between their respective academic traditions. He also claims that any transnational study of culture presupposes interdisciplinary cooperation, and theoretical and methodological pluralism. After suggesting that we should re/consider what we mean when we say “cultural studies” he goes a step further, arguing that the same applies to the semantisation of “culture”, which ranges from reductive to totalising. In order to develop more systematic transnational approaches to culture, Nünning opts for the sharing of concepts and methods across disciplines. He believes that the international effect of cultural memory studies may serve as a great template for furthering transnational cultural studies, and argues that the international academy has already taken initial steps in this direction. He cites Bachmann-Medick’s 2006 book on cultural turns in the humanities (published in English as *Cultural Turns* by De Gruyter in 2016), works by famous Canadian cultural studies scholar Imre Szeman, Chakrabarty’s previously mentioned *Provincializing Europe*, and Mieke Bal’s influential 2002 study *Travelling Concepts*. While Szeman maps the risks and promises of a global model of studying cultural practices in everyday life, Chakrabarty and Bal debunk the notion of cultural concepts as operative, since

they reflect the continuous layering of ideologies and contexts.

It is indicative that both introductory papers point out that transnational approaches to the study of culture are yet to be achieved. This sets the tone for the rest of the papers in the volume, which is organised into two sections: the first more theoretical, and the second constituting a series of case studies.

The section titled "Conceptualizations and Histories" starts with Dipesh Chakrabarty's "personal" account about the concept of "displacement-as-translation" (53), used to discuss modernity. Unlike other scholars in the volume, Chakrabarty is not only in the position to debunk the Anglo-American model of cultural studies, but, being both an insider and an outsider, he embarks on a much larger project to show the extent to which European paradigms were displaced and transformed in the *Subaltern Studies* project, through a complex and uneven two-way translation process. Arguing for plurality of history and the fact that no society functions as a *tabula rasa* when coming under non-native ideologies, which is examined comprehensively in *Provincializing Europe*, Chakrabarty uses a personal account to show how Marx's ideas became an indisputable analytical tool of the Calcutta School, and how the Maoist movement and Gramsci influenced the work of *Subaltern Studies*. One of *Subaltern Studies*' famous "translation points" was the "romantic-popular search for a non-industrial revolutionary subject" (65), which was supposed to replace the (Russian) proletariat. This translation proved an impossible task in the "peasant-based economies drawn into the gravitational pull of the capitalist world" (66). Moreover, Chakrabarty argues that the very categories of "the peasant" (Mao), "subaltern" (Gramsci),

"the wretched of the earth" (Fanon), and "the party as the subject" (Lenin/Lukács) are encumbered with instability and imprecision. As a consequence of "loose" translations and the inadequacy of Eurocentric thought, the "revolutionary-subject-that-is-not-the-proletariat" remains undefined and "inaugurates the need for new thought and research outside the West" (67).

Jon Solomon's provocative contribution is based on the concept of *indeterminacy* of people(s) and languages(s), which may lead to developing non-national/normative/anthropological understandings of culture. Relying on Naoki Sakai's work on translation and subjectivity, Solomon rejects the notion of national narratives and assumptions about human collectivity, and calls for translation to be a "bridgehead in the campaign for peaceful understanding" (75). However, translation hides a series of institutional asymmetries, so instead of being comparative by focusing on the relation between autonomous objects that represent "pluralities in the speciation of the human" (80), it should focus on relations that constitute singular subjects irrespective of speciation. Solomon also raises the notion of experience and knowledge, and, like Sakai, debunks the validity of the concept of "shared experience", which underlies the concept of "national belonging". The final critique is preserved for institutions that produce and disseminate knowledge. Instead of moulding ourselves into subjects that fit the citation indexes that contribute to capitalism, we should focus on the social relations that come before and after knowledge, provided we understand the production of knowledge as a "social practice that cannot be contained in the epistemological models of representa-

tion and observation", which cannot be an "end in itself" (87).

The next three contributions address the process of translation in the study of culture as a "travelling concept" and a "mode of travel". Andreas Langenohl outlines different concepts of translation in literary studies and science and technology studies, ranging from theoretical, to analytical, to meta-theoretical, in order to find possible contact points. He detects that translation does not simply mediate between two different contexts, but that it changes them in order to unmask their instability. Moreover, the text/context distinction becomes ineffective, since "through translation, texts, speech acts, and actions are *taken out* of their contexts in order to encounter each other" (106). However, while this reflects "mundane and everyday encounters" (110) that can "confuse conventions [and] need not at all be systematized [...] with cultural systems" (110), it may pose a problem for the way in which the scientific community studies/translates culture. According to Langenohl, one possible solution may be the constitution of "cross-national research collaborations" (112), which would create an "epistemological laboratory of the study of culture" (112).

By defining "travelling concepts" as "global passageways of knowledge" (119), and by appropriating Said's notion of "travelling theory" as one connected to people, Bachmann-Medick revitalises the "exhausted" concept of hybridity to show how translation implies hybridisation and self-hybridisation (127). She stresses the importance of studying travelling theories from their point(s) of origin to their destination point(s), reconnecting universal concepts with local histories by avoiding the trappings of one-way (neo)colonial translations.

In other words, travelling concepts or "concepts in translation" (133) demand deeper socio-historical underpinnings. As the scholar warns, such an endeavour would also imply reconsidering the alleged universal (Eurocentric) categories used in the humanities.

Matthias Middell's discussion on travelling concepts (or cultural transfers) starts with a historical survey of this elusive concept, which has no single point of origin but appeared as a result of global changes since the 1980s. As a historian, Middell offers examples of successful transnational cooperation in the field of world history. As he argues, this does not imply that humanities and social sciences have established an integrated discussion, irrespective of transnational forms of communication, nor that the collaborations have been even across disciplines.

The paper by Christina Lutter closes the first section, and effectively announces that the rest of the book will focus on specific translational case studies. Lutter evokes the relation between language and culture to address the problem of essentialist and static concepts of culture, which is also raised in Nünning's introductory paper. Lutter argues that the problems of cultural translations are not restricted to the contemporary period. Hence, in the analysis of the 5th-century hagiographic account of Saint Severinus, the *Vita St. Severini*, Lutter shows that even although the text was mostly interpreted as a narrative about the clash of cultures (Romans vs. "barbarians"), it equally reveals a series of alternative stories, in which the categories of "Romans" and "barbarians" become unstable and do not fit the "grand narrative".

In the second section, entitled "Knowledge Systems and Discursive

Fields", scholars mainly from the German academic community offer their renditions of the problems surrounding different national cultural studies and closely related disciplines. Boris Buden investigates the impossibility and arbitrariness of discussing the field of "Eastern European study of culture". He raises a series of problems related to the term: whether it connotes a geopolitical space marked by a general cultural concept; whether it is a cluster of different cultures; and what it is analysed against, i.e. what it is different from. Since many questions cannot be solved, the author concludes ironically that since this identity is "underdeveloped, belated, provincial, peripheral, [...]", one "doesn't have to know much about [it]" (174). Irony aside, Buden discusses the available critical apparatus to see whether it may help to provide a better insight into the translation of "Eastern European" culture. He refers to Maria Todorova's term "Balkanism", i.e. Todorova's take on Saidan Orientalism, from her groundbreaking study *Imagining the Balkans* (1997) and Slavoj Žižek's concept of "over-identification". Buden concludes that, regarding the latter, it was not Žižek supported by Slovenian Lacanians who came up with the term, but that it was ever present in the media and in private talks (178). This proves Bachmann-Medick's claim of the importance of tracing travelling concepts back to their places of origin.

Christa Knellwolf King offers a survey of Australian cultural studies, which focuses on history, race, gender and the space burdened by the country's colonial past and postcolonial present. Accordingly, cultural studies here centre on the issue of Australia's origin as a settler/invasor colony, which led to the so-called History Wars: an ongoing public debate

over Australia's early colonial history, initiated in the late 1990s. This is also the period in which critical whiteness studies reached Australia from the USA, and become a powerful tool for Indigenous scholars to scrutinise the hegemony of whiteness that stemmed from Australia's racist past. Gender debates focus on debunking Australia's male heterosexual matrix, which, as Germaine Greer contested in the 1970s, spilled over into the 20th century. Australia's distinctive spatiality also plays a prominent role in the study of culture: the outback represents a historical space of national distinctiveness, with its inherent beauty and the terror it inspires in Anglo-Australian society, while the city space becomes a site for testing gendered experiences in the critically acclaimed work of Drusilla Modjeska. The 21st century saw the rise of xenophobia in Australia, and Australian cultural studies replied with the need to negotiate the multicultural makeup of the country. Due to its distinctive socio-historical trajectory, it is unsurprising that Australian cultural studies have remained mostly embedded in national, rather than international debates.

Rainer Winter traces the historical development of British cultural studies, i.e. the "original project" of cultural studies developed in Birmingham, and fleshes out its basic critical methodology. Coming from the context of the New Left in the UK, cultural studies focused on the notion of resistance, drawing on Gramsci's analysis of hegemony and Foucault's deconstruction of modern power. This, however, does not mean that Marxist views on the primacy of a dominant ideology for understanding culture have been incorporated into cultural studies unproblematically. As Winter argues, *contextualism* was and still is crucial for understanding the context

in which resistant practices occur, but it is always heterogeneous. Through the work of Stuart Hall, this aspect became crucial to the study of media texts, as it led to the conclusion that "there is no 'right' or 'true' reading of media texts from the perspective of cultural studies" (212). Winter also evokes the ethnographic (lived experience) perspective in cultural studies, which introduces specific ethics into the discipline. As he argues, transnational cultural studies are a great example of the attempt to explore the boundaries of the discipline, and to reconnect "academic knowledge with a political understanding of culture and society" (218).

The mention of Stuart Hall in Winter's paper serves as a specific introduction to Thomas Weber's consideration of media and communication in the framework of transnational cultural studies in Germany and France through the launch of the ARTE channel. Weber explains why ARTE faced a series of problems in the 1990s as a result of its attempt to create a cultural program acceptable to both countries, and why this was so hard to achieve. He observes that both countries neglected to translate key theoretical works into their native tongues: while Germans lagged behind in translating eponymous works by French scholars such as Derrida, Lacan and Lyotard, the French were not acquainted with the work of German media theorists Friedrich Kittler and Siegfried Zielinski. Another difference can be seen in the institutional organisation of the discipline: while the French combine communication with "information science" and have a centralised (uniform) structure for dissemination of knowledge about media and communication in higher education, the German model is diverse and depends on the

preferences of a given state (*Bundesland*). Even though both countries call for internationalisation of their disciplines, Weber warns that this does not mean the same thing to each of them, and that the translational project may stumble on a series of obstacles.

In the concluding contribution, Birgit Mersmann charts the parallel beginning and subsequent split between visual culture and studies in the UK (and the rest of the anglophone world), and image culture (*Bildwissenschaft*) in Germany, triggered by the same mid-1990s cultural turn in the humanities. The author shows that the transnational study of visual culture has made almost no impact on German-speaking visual research even though it has spread throughout the world, while the German *Bildwissenschaft* has only achieved exchanges with France and Italy. As Mersmann detects, even though the disciplines relied on almost identical disciplines – art history, literary studies, media studies and cultural studies – their institutionalisation, which was caused by divergent restructuring of higher education in the USA and Germany caused by crises in the humanities, lead to their untranslatability. Mersmann's retrospective gaze reveals a paradox: it seems that art history, the two disciplines' starting point, has adapted easily to the transnational turn by enacting world art studies and global art history.

In conclusion, even though the volume would have profited from the inclusion of more versatile voices (the inclusion of Chakrabarty is a step in this direction), it does achieve its key aim of showing the multifaceted aspects of translating versatile methodologies and traditions within cultural studies. Given the topic of the volume, it is no wonder that the scholars pose many questions

to which they cannot provide straight answers. If they could, it would defy the very nature of cultural studies as always casting a critical gaze on the theoretical paradigms from which it grew. However, the questions raised by the scholars in this volume already contain the most

important bullet points for the further development of trans/national cultural studies. Hence, the volume can be seen as their invitation to other cultural studies scholars to join the translational debate.

Iva Polak

DE-CENTERING KRLEŽA'S OEUVRE

Predrag Brebanović, Avangarda krležiana, pismo ne o avangardi, Zagreb: Naklada Jesenski i Turk i Arkzin, 2016, 263 pp.

Miroslav Krleža seems still to be stirring polemic re-readings, especially among the intellectuals of the middle generation. From *Krleža za ponavljače (Krleža for Repeaters)*, edited by Boris Gunjević in 2014, via *Povratak Miroslava Krleže (The Return of Miroslav Krleža)*, edited by Tomislav Brlek in 2016, to the most recent *Mit o Krleži (The Krleža Myth)* by Sanja Nikčević in 2017, his status as a major figure in Croatian literary, cultural and political scenes is undeniable. Krleža's opus spans almost the entire twentieth century, and reaffirms his long-standing influence and inexhaustible provocation, which reach far beyond the period mentioned, and persist despite stubborn endeavours to challenge his status, or at least undermine his importance. The three books

previously mentioned differ greatly in their perspectives, levels of expertise, and ambitions: the first explicitly rejects academic presumption, and continues to see Krleža primarily as a cultural critic whose contemporary resonance does not cease to astonish; the second is more scholarly oriented, praising above all else the writer's literary merits as being on par with the greatest European modernist artists; and the third belongs to the tradition of rebellion against his overpowering shadow. This study desperately attempts to downsize Krleža's almost divine stature, which, as has often been proclaimed in previous decades, dwarfs all other Croatian writers, allegedly without justification. But Predrag Brebanović's playfully titled *Avant-Garde Krležiana, a Letter Not about/to the Neo Avant-Garde* is the first sustained study in the post-communist era that is bold enough to tackle the thorny issue of Krleža's Yugoslav and communist allegiances. Because of these, Krleža was, according to Brebanović, a nuisance to Croatian and Serbian academics and publicists alike: the former were eager to re-appropriate his former glory for contemporary nationalist sacralisation,